

ATTACHMENT 4.12

Annual State Goals and Reports of Progress

Attachment 4.12 (b) Annual Estimates of Individuals to be Served and Costs of Services

- A. It is estimated that 19,500 individuals will be served during FY 2006.
- B. Of the 19,500 individuals served 19,400 will be served under Part B of Title I of the Act and 100 under Part B of Title VI of the Act (Supported Employment Program). As USOR is not on an order of selection (OOS), there is no identification of eligible individuals receiving services under any such OOS priority category.
- C. It is estimated that \$19,900,000 in service costs will be spent during FY 2006 in providing vocational rehabilitation services to the number estimated in (A) above.

Attachment 4.12 (c)(1) State's Goals and Priorities

The goals of the Utah State Office of Rehabilitation (USOR) vocational rehabilitation and supported employment program are as follows:

- A. Provide services to 19,500 individuals under Part B of Title I of the Act.
- B. Provide services to 100 individuals under Part B Title VI of the Act and successfully rehabilitate 45 individuals.
- C. Successfully rehabilitate 2,600 individuals under Part B of Title I of the Act.
- D. Continue to provide a broad range of assistive technology services and assistive technology devices statewide to eligible individuals at each stage of the rehabilitation process.
- E. Sixty-five percent of the total number served will be classified as individuals with significant disabilities.
- F. Ten percent of the total number served will be classified as individuals with the most significant disabilities.
- G. Maintain or exceed a seventy percent rate of overall satisfied or very satisfied of individual completing and returning consumer satisfaction surveys.

H. Implement the following strategies to improve and expand the vocational rehabilitation and supported programs:

1. Assure that caseloads are manageable.
2. Attract, value, and retain quality staff.
3. Assure the provision of quality services and outcomes.
4. Improve the quality of communication.
5. Assure that all staff has adequate professional development, training, and supervision to successfully perform their job.

Attachment 4.12(c)(3) Goals and Plans for Distribution of Title VI, Part B Funds

The goals and plans for distribution of Title VI, Part B funds is based on the Utah State Office of Rehabilitation (USOR) analysis of its comprehensive assessment including analysis of supported employment providers, consumers and VR counselors who use supported employment. To address a trend over recent years of decreasing clients in supported employment, USOR is co-funding/contracting with the University of Utah to conduct a study looking at barriers to having a successful supported employment service program in the state of Utah. This study will include looking at alternatives for revitalization of supported employment for those clients who can benefit from such services.

USOR will distribute FY 2006 funding received under section 622 of the Act for supported employment services for services identified in the IPE's of individuals who have been determined eligible for services under the policies of Title VI, Part B.

Upon approval of the standards and indicators established under section 106 of the Act, USOR will include evaluation of performance relevant to the standards in developing future plans for this distribution of funds received under section 622 of the Act.

Attachment 4.12(d) Describes the State's Strategies, including those identified in section 101(a)(15)(d) of the Act and the innovation and expansion activities of paragraph 4.13(a) of this State plan, the designated State agency will use to:

- A. address the needs identified in the assessment conducted under paragraph (a) of this subsection and achieve the goals and priorities identified in paragraph (c) of this subsection;

- B. carryout outreach activities to identify and serve individuals with the most significant disabilities who are minorities consistent with the provisions of subsection 7.6 of the State plan supplement; and
- C. overcome identified barriers relating to equitable access to and participation of individuals with disabilities in the State Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program and State Supported Employment Services Program.

USOR has implemented the following strategies to accomplish the above three items. These strategies were developed in coordination with the State Rehabilitation Council.

1. Assure that caseloads are manageable

Objective A. Within the next five years reduce the number of consumers served per caseload per year.

A number of activities have been undertaken to assist counselors in maintaining manageable caseloads. These activities include (1) establishing guidelines for processing inactive cases so they can be closed and not consume unproductive counselor time;(2) development and implementation of eligibility training to assist counselors in making appropriate eligibility decisions; (3) hire additional counselors and place them in new caseloads made up of clients drawn from larger existing caseloads; and (4) maintain a order of selection procedure that can be quickly implemented if determined necessary.

Objective B. Establish Counselor Assistant positions.

Two Counselor Assistant positions have been piloted successfully within USOR. Implementation of these pilot positions, known as Rehabilitation Technicians, have resulted in many duties being shifted to these new positions that have here-to-fore been performed by the counselors. These are duties that are not required to be completed by the Rehabilitation Counselor, and free up time for the counselor to perform to a greater degree the essential duties of the profession, and reduce caseload stress. As a result of this success, additional Rehabilitation Technician positions are planned to be systematically implemented statewide. Currently six (6) Counselor Assistant positions have been put in place across Utah. Additional Counselor Assistant positions may be added thereafter, as warranted, within some districts in accordance with agency ability to do so.

Objective C. Enhance supervisory expectations to assist counselors with time management.

USOR is in process of developing a basic supervisory skills training, specific to supervision

duties within the State-Federal vocational rehabilitation program in Utah. Modeled after the already occurring Basic Counselor Orientation Training, this basic supervisory skills training will provide orientation and instruction on supervisory expectation and skill development for staff in existing supervisory roles, and secondarily to those wishing to pursue supervisory roles within the agency.

2. Attract, value, and retain quality staff.

Objective A: Attract a diversified and qualified staff.

The following activities have been undertaken to achieve this objective.

- (1) *Marketing to new employees:* Staff of the Utah State Office of Rehabilitation (USOR) as well as human resource staff have informed potential new employees of educational benefits, compensation packages and a work friendly office environment. These activities are ongoing.
- (2) *Participate in college career fairs:* District Directors have been assigned to, and have participated in local college and other career fairs to promote the opportunities of working as a vocational rehabilitation counselor. This activity is being closely coordinates with and completed in conjunction with the Outreach Coordinator of the Masters of Rehabilitation Counseling program from Utah State University.
- (3) *Develop brochure and website:* A website and written materials will be designed to promote Utah as a desirable place to live and work, as well as explain the advantages of choosing a career in the field of rehabilitation. A new agency website is under construction at this time.
- (4) *Increase Salaries:* USOR administrative staff have developed and implemented a recruitment and retention plan during FY 2004 that over time will raise the lower end of the salary range for rehabilitation counselors hired into the agency. It is felt that these higher starting salaries will find USOR attracting more qualified and quality individuals to the agency.
- (5) *All staff active in recruitment:* All staff participates in recruitment of qualified staff by promoting USOR with other agencies and organizations as well as with people with disabilities.
- (6) *Market to graduate programs:* Employment opportunities are marked through the National Clearing House Website located at the Rehab Recruitment Center in Oklahoma.

Objective B: Value a diversified and qualified staff.

The following activities have been undertaken to achieve this objective.

- (1) *Communicating to staff agency philosophy:* Agency philosophy is provided in statewide staff meetings and scheduled for open meetings that will be held with all staff and cover staff concerns, issues and philosophies.
- (2) *Involve staff in agency policies and procedures:* Staff are provided drafts of all significant changes in policies and procedures and encouraged to provide input prior to finalization of policies and procedures.
- (3) *Provide appropriate technology, office space and working conditions:* The agency's facility specialist analyzes each office and determines the need for appropriate working conditions, including technology.
- (4) *Individualized plans for continuing education:* USOR has implemented procedures that individually consider educational needs of staff on an individualized basis following an identified supervisory pathway which is confirmed by the training specialist.

Objective C: Retain a diversified and qualified staff.

The following activities have been undertaken to achieve this objective:

- (1) *Understand mission of VR:* All staff are participating in helping individuals outside the agency understand the intrinsic value of the Vocational Rehabilitation Program and the difference it makes in the lives of individuals who receive these services.
- (2) *Educate staff concerning compensation package:* During monthly statewide staff meetings compensation packages have been discussed and explained with supervisory staff who in turn have related this information to line staff.
- (3) *Increase Salaries:* USOR administrative staff have developed and implemented a recruitment and retention plan during FY 2004 that has resulted in a 5.5% increase of salaries for Rehabilitation Counselors meeting successful or better performance ratings for FY 2003 performance measures. Another salary increase for Counselors meeting the same standards will be implemented in FY 2005 as agency funding allows. Additionally, performance related pay incentives for counselors have been established in the areas of above average production in successful closures and SSA cost reimbursement cases.
- (4) *Quality performance review process:* Administrative staff is emphasizing to supervisory staff the importance of accurate and relevant performance plans and performance

evaluations. Administration, field leadership, and counseling staff together developed an improved and more accurate performance plan for use beginning in FY 2004 for rating performance of rehabilitation counselors as well as secretaries.

2. Assure the provision of quality services and outcomes.

Objective A: We will implement the other identified strategic planning strategies.

Objective B: All VR services and outcomes will be a result of clients' informed choice. USOR will implement the agency developed working definition of informed choice for use with applicants and clients and their rehabilitation counselors. Additionally, the principles of Informed Choice will be oriented to applicants and clients through the orientation DVD and brochures developed in conjunction with the State Rehabilitation Council and throughout the process of working with the agency.

Objective C: We will enable clients to evaluate their VR services and outcomes. This will be completed through the implementation of the Consumer Satisfaction Survey recently revised with the State Rehabilitation Council and other periodic methods to evaluate consumer satisfaction to include, but not limited to; focus groups, town meetings, telephone and other surveys.

Objective D: We will enable counselors to evaluate the quality of client VR services and outcomes. This capacity to evaluate the quality of VR services and outcomes will be presented through reports generated from the following activities:

- a. monthly random supervisory casefile reviews,
- b. annual statewide casefile review activity, and
- c. consumer satisfaction survey reports

Objective E: We will enable supervisors and others to evaluate VR services and outcomes. The following details the activities to implement these objectives: Supervisors, Counselors, Individuals responsible for orientation, Basic Counselor Orientation and Training, EdNet, the Case Review Exercise, Eligibility training, and other training are all focusing on and emphasizing informed choice and quality of services and outcomes. Clients are being educated about their rights and the availability of the Client Assistance Program to assist them. Reviews indicate excellent compliance on these.

Two of the three key surveys generated by the Strategy 4 Group were done as a pilot with this years case service review exercise. The third survey which was the survey of clients to obtain their own quality ratings is planned to be done as part of the comprehensive client survey. Quality assessment surveys of the counselor and the counselor's supervisor were obtained. All client satisfaction survey responses that indicate satisfaction or dissatisfaction are being administratively reviewed. A system has been implemented that enables supervisors and others

to evaluate VR services and outcomes. We continue to emphasize the provision of quality service and outcomes in all training activities and written training materials.

The following future activities are planned:

- a. Evaluate the completed counselor and counselor supervisor surveys both for content and for the form itself.
- b. Convene a Strategic Planning Group #4 meeting to discuss the current results.
- c. Obtain and if possible evaluate the client ratings.
- d. Continue to emphasize the provision of quality service and outcomes in all training and written training materials.
- e. Monitor the achievements of the other strategy groups. We have previously agreed that their accomplishments will all contribute to quality of service.

4. Improve the quality of communication.

Objective A. Create an environment to ensure open communication

- (1) Ongoing Support Activities: **Activity 1:** A standing committee to address and promote an open door policy has been established. **Activity 2:** The committee is working on putting together a survey to send to all staff for the purpose of identifying areas of communication that are working well and areas that need to be addressed. **Activity 3:** Recommendations from the committee have been made to resend the survey one year after the original survey is sent, to provide follow up information. **Activity 4:** A consulting approach when interacting with staff at all levels has been addressed and emphasized by Administration, District Directors, Supervisors and lead secretaries. This will be an ongoing emphasis to all staff.
- (2) Meetings and Group Activities: **Activity 1:** Ground rules and parameters will be established after the completion of training (see activity b) **Activity 2:** Training on how to conduct an effective meeting will be provided to Administration, District Directors, Supervisors and any staff person who is responsible for conducting meetings. Arrangements will be made to complete this activity within the next six months. **Activity 3:** co-facilitators to assist in maintaining open communication during agency meetings have been assigned where appropriate. **Activity 4:** Minutes of meetings are being kept and distributed. **Activity 5:** Agenda's are prepared for each meeting which helps in determining appropriate discussion format. This is ongoing. **Activity 6:** Responsible individuals for conducting meetings are looking more closely at the purpose, need and frequency of the need for meetings and are involving the minimum number of staff needed to accomplish the purpose of the meeting. This is ongoing. **Activity 7:** All staff is being provided informational items by using e-mail technology. This is ongoing. **Activity 8:** It has been recommended to those taking minutes that the minutes are

distributed as quickly as possible following the meetings (preferably within two weeks). There has been improvement noted in this area. This is ongoing. **Activity 9:** This is ongoing---Will continue to work with those conducting and recording meetings to identify and distribute action items to those in attendance within five days. **Activity 10:** District Directors have reported they are holding staff meetings at least once a month for the purpose of distributing information to staff and improving communication within Districts.

Objective B: Adopt, reinforce, and support USOR policies and practices regarding internal and external customer service utilizing appropriate ethical behavior and standards of conduct.

Activity 1& 2: Standards of conduct that will promote a positive work environment and a professional atmosphere and acceptable use policy, disclosure of confidential information and DHRM policies and procedures are being addressed with staff, on a regular basis, by Administration, District Directors, supervisory staff, HR and training specialist, in basic counselor orientation training, and in District staff meetings and in service training meetings.

Activity 3: Administrative and supervisory staff monitor and review with staff their understanding and compliance with policies and procedures on an ongoing basis. This is also addressed on performance plans.

Activity 4: All new staff participates in basic counselor orientation and training within the first month of hire. They do receive training on the policies and procedures described in activity 2. Additional training is provided to new staff on a ongoing basis by their immediate supervisory staff in the districts.

Activity 5-7: The importance of adopting and practicing principles of good customer services is emphasized by supervisory staff in every district, on an ongoing basis. It has been recommended that all staff be provided Customer service training.

Objective C: Establish a prioritization system for intra-agency communication.

Activity 1-6: It has been recommended by the committee that the agency adopt the CSAVR procedures for assigning a priority to internet and e-mail communications. This has not been implemented yet and will be an ongoing discussion in future committee meetings. Suggestions and ideas will be taken to AST for discussion within the next six months.

5. Assure that all staff has adequate professional development, training, and supervision to successfully perform their job.

Objective A. Develop and implement counselor orientation training.

The Basic Counselor Orientation Training (BCOT) process has been implemented and running for approximately one year. Surveys of its benefit have shown it to be a positive activity for the agency. Based on oversight observations and comments/recommendations from participants, ongoing innovation to this process continues with consistent review and revision of the structure, materials, and methodologies under which this training occurs.

Objective B: Develop and implement a clerical orientation and training program.

This objective is planned to be accomplished through the establishment of a training process similar to the Basic Counselor Orientation Training, developed specifically for support staff. Appropriate training materials will be developed to provide guidance for the identified positions.

Objective C: Development of supervisory and management skills.

This objective is being met through offering level 1 CPM supervisor training to interested identified potential supervisors. Current supervisors are required to attend levels 1, 2 and 3. Assessment of ongoing supervision skills in accordance with expectations are being evaluated through the case service administration. In addition to CPM, agency specific supervisory training is being developed, utilizing the model put forth in the Basic Counselor Orientation Training.

Objective D: Maintain a visionary organization through leadership development.

This objective is being accomplished through the education of staff on leadership development, practices and opportunities on an ongoing basis. Opportunities for leadership training and development are also provided to individuals as needed for the overall improvement of the organization. Over 6 sessions of leadership training have been provided over the last 2 years.

Attachment 4.12(e) Evaluation and Report of Progress in Achieving Identified Goals and Priorities and Use of Title I Funds for Innovation and Expansion Activities

The USOR has identified innovation and expansion activities under Title I funds for innovation and expansion. The activity was identified through our strategic planning process which involved the SRC, state staff and other interested parties.

The activities identified are as follows:

Supported Employment Rejuvenation Project

Evaluation and Modification of Basic Counselor Orientation Training program.

The initial four activities of the basic counselor orientation training ((a)Identify staff and assign responsibility for training, (b)Train district directors and supervisors, (c)Train current counselors and clerical staff, (d) Provide training to new staff) have all been accomplished and are part of this ongoing training process. This training has assisted in USOR standardizing the skill level of new counselors entering into the program. The training is conducted in a fully automated training center which allows the new counselors to have hands on experience with USOR's Management and Information System. In addition, all counselors hired prior to the implementation of this program have received this training. Based upon evaluation of this training process after over one year experience with it, and participant assessment and recommendation, continued innovation and expansion of the program have occurred. The structure of the process has been modified to two (2) shorter sessions of training as opposed to the one (1) longer training session. This has allowed for more immediate practical use of things trained on, and improved use of counselor time in managing job responsibilities.

Development of Basic Secretary Orientation Training Program

To provide orientation and training on the responsibilities and expectations of the secretarial positions within USOR, the agency is developing training modules and process that is modeled after the successful Basic Counselor Orientation Training that has been operating in the agency for over two years now. This orientation training is specific to the role and responsibility set for the VR system secretary.

Development of Basic Supervision Orientation and Training Program

Resultant of significant personnel changes to USOR, including substantial changes to our supervisory staff, it has been clearly identified that there is a need to provide orientation and training on the responsibilities and expectations of supervisors within the agency. In conjunction with the existing Basic Counselor Orientation and Training and afore mentioned Basic Secretary Orientation and Training , USOR is also developing training modules and process that is specific to the role and responsibility for supervisory staff of the VR system in Utah.

Rehabilitation Counselor Recruitment and Retention

Two of the greater issues in providing quality services to eligible individuals with disabilities has been the high turnover rate USOR has experienced over the past few years. While some of the turnover has been related to retirement of veteran staff, the agency was also seeing a large number of its less experienced but quality staff leaving the agency for other employment, resulting in increased client complaints and diminished quality of services. Assessment of the

basis for this trend identified two primary reasons; stresses of large caseloads and salary. While the prior reason will be addressed later, the latter is the basis for this innovation activity. During FY 2004, in order to recruit more qualified candidates to fill vacancies within the agency and to retain the quality staff already had USOR implemented a recruitment and retention plan. This implementation resulted in up to a “two-step” or 5.5% pay increase for rehabilitation counselors, and positions benchmarked to the rehabilitation counselor position, who met standard or better performance ratings in FY 2003 who were below midpoint of the salary range. For those same positions above midpoint who also met the performance standards, a “one-step” or 2.5% salary increase was given. It is intended that a similar salary increase will be provided under the same terms in FY 2005 as agency funding allows. As a result of the process, the starting salary for new hires into the rehabilitation counseling positions is increased. This salary increase is expected to result in two general outcomes:

1. To retain the quality rehabilitation counseling staff employed by the agency, and
2. To attract an increased number of qualified applicants to fill rehabilitation counselor vacancies in the agency.

In addition to the salary increases, pay incentives have also been implemented for counselors to receive incentive payments for above average number of quality successful closures at the end of the fiscal year, and for successful closure of SSA cases that result in cost reimbursement.

Rehabilitation Counselor Assistant (Rehabilitation Technician) Positions

Noted above, stresses of large workload contributed to an increasing turnover rate for rehabilitation counselors of the agency. As part of the Strategic Planning activities of the agency, in FY 2002-2003 USOR piloted two Rehabilitation Technician positions in two of the eight districts statewide. The purpose of these positions were to perform many of the activities that traditionally had been completed by the counselor but which were not those items that were required to be completed by the counselor. These activities included but are not limited to; conducting orientation, tracking clients, gathering information, updating certain forms, etc. Through the pilot of these positions it was found that the provision of these duties by the Rehab. Tech. position provided more time for the counselor to engage in the critical aspects of assessing and determining eligibility, completing comprehensive assessment, providing rehabilitation counseling, etc. Due to the positive outcome of the pilot of these two positions, expansion of the positions statewide is underway. Roll-out of these positions is occurring systematically. Initially, one Rehabilitation Technician position will be implemented in each of the districts statewide. Thereafter, based upon need and availability of funding, additional Rehabilitation Technician positions will be added to those districts that warrant them. Through this expansion activity it is expected that the agency will see a) reduced stress for counselors which will reduce turnover of quality staff, and b) improved rehabilitation counseling services for clients.

IRIS (Integrated Rehabilitation Information System) Capability Additions

On-line Internal Review Instrument: For many years the USOR has conducted internal random reviews of case files as part of an overall continuous improvement philosophy to improve quality services for eligible individuals with disabilities. To conduct these reviews a hard copy review instrument has been utilized. In an innovative effort, the agency has developed and will be systematically rolling out an electronic on-line review instrument and process for the conducting of these internal reviews by Supervisors, District Directors and Administrative staff. With this system the agency will be able to; reduce processing steps of making aggregate information available, significantly reduce turnaround time in generating meaningful results, and in providing more meaningful results, all for use in the continuous improvement process.

IRIS To-Do List: As a caseload management tool for counselors, a “To-Do List” tool has been developed and is being systematically rolled out to agency staff. The tool provides, within IRIS, the ability for the Rehabilitation Counselor to self-identify and prioritize tasks that they need to complete within their job responsibilities. It includes such features as; secure direct linking from the To-Do List to individual client information within IRIS for task completion and automatic notification of updates to client information stored within IRIS relative to automated data sharing with the Department of Workforce Services (DWS) relative to SSI/SSDI verification and wage data. This data share MOU with DWS and the programming to automate the sharing of this critical information is a significant innovative achievement in Utah, and is serving as a model with DWS for similar data sharing efforts with other agencies.